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OFFICE
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

L. W. Camp
Director
Automotive Safety Office
Environmental And Safety Engineering

Ford Motor Company
330 Town Center Drive
Dearborn, Michigan 48126 USA

June 7, 1999

Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein
Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

99V-147 (02)

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Pursuant to Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Defect and Noncompliance Reports, Ford Motor Company submits the following information concerning a safety-compliance recall action that it is initiating.

573.5 (c) (2)

Certain 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999 model year Ford Windstar vehicles built at the Oakville Assembly Plant from June 16, 1996 through May 31, 1999.

Because the vehicles are not produced in VIN order, information as to the applicability of this action to specific vehicles can best be obtained by either calling Ford's toll-free line (1-800-392-3673), or contacting a local Ford dealer who can obtain specific information regarding the vehicles from the Ford OASIS computer system.

573.5 (c) (3)

Approximately 790,000 vehicles are involved in this recall action.



573.5 (c) (4)

SSV-147 (U)

All of these vehicles are affected.

573.5 (c) (5)

On affected vehicles, the brake fluid master cylinder is recessed and oriented in the engine compartment such that the brake fluid warning statement embossed on both the top of the filler cap and the side of the reservoir body are not entirely visible by direct view. These vehicles, therefore, may not comply with the FMVSS 135 requirement that the warning statement (WARNING: Clean filler cap before removing. Use only _____ fluid from a sealed container) be "Located so as to be visible by direct view, either on or within 100mm (3.94 inches) of the brake fluid reservoir filler plug or cap".

The 1994 and 1995 model year vehicles used a warning label affixed to the front of the brake fluid reservoir that fully satisfied the subject requirement. Starting with the 1996 model year vehicles, the reservoir design was changed and the warning was embossed on the side of the reservoir. The label formerly affixed to the front of the reservoir was eliminated. Because of the reservoir's orientation and location in the engine compartment, the embossed warning was not entirely visible by direct view.

As of May 31, 1999, brake fluid reservoirs with labels affixed to the front of the reservoir are being used in production. The labels contain the required warning statement, and are entirely visible by direct view as installed in the vehicle.

573.5 (c) (7)

The condition was brought to Ford's attention through the Agency's inquiry (NSA-31Sse, PE-105-990426) received by Ford on May 13, 1999. Subsequent investigation by Ford confirmed the condition and identified the affected vehicle population.

June 7, 1999

99V-147 (8)

573.5 (c) (8)

Ford is not aware of any field or owner reports or allegations of accidents or injuries related to this condition. Owners of record of the affected vehicles will be notified on or about the week of July 6, 1999. The notification letters will include labels containing the required warning statement, to be affixed by the owners to the front of the brake fluid reservoir similar to the 1994 and 1995 model year vehicles. Instructions and wipe materials will be provided for affixing the labels, and owners will be advised that at their option, they may contact their dealers and make arrangements for dealer installation of the label at no charge.

573.5 (c) (9)

Ford does not at this time plan to make a statement available to the media concerning the subject matter of this recall. We have identified and, through our owner notification mailing, will communicate directly to the owners of each affected vehicle. Copies of the Notification letters to dealers and owners from Ford Customer Service Division will be forwarded to the agency when available.

573.5 (c) (11)

Ford has assigned campaign number 99S17 to this action.

Very truly yours,


L. W. Camp

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